

ΧΕΙΡΟΘΕΣΙΑ:
O R,
A CONFIRMATION
OF THE
Apostolicall Confirmation
OF
CHILDREN:

Setting forth
The Divine Ground, End, and
Use of that too much neglected
INSTITUTION.

And now published as an excellent
expedient to Truth and Peace.

By JOS. HALL, D. D.
B. Norwich.

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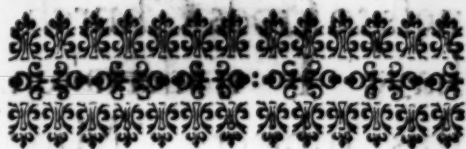
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*To all Gods Faithfull
People every where,
Grace and Peace.*



Not out of
any light
affectatiō,
or out of a
Crosse humour of
vainly striving against
the streame, (my wit-
nesse is in Heaven;)
but out of a care to
approve my faithful-
ness

ness to Gods Church,
have I undertaken
this subject. Mine
eyes tell me too plain-
ly, that an Apostoli-
call Institution is pal-
pably neglected ; and
my heart tels me, both
how infinitely advan-
tageous , and benefi-
ciall, the practise of it,
if duly revived, might
be to the Church of
Christ ; and how ex-
tream losers , Gods
People are by the
want

want of it. I durst not
therefore but impart
these thoughts to the
world before I leave
it ; humbly recom-
mending the to the se-
rious consideration of
all wel-affected Chri-
stians ; who shall soon
find, upon these poor
suggestions, how hap-
py it were, if in this
case, we could walke
with an even foot in the
mid-way betwixt Ro-
mish Superstition, and

fane neglect. The
God of Heaven make
us wise to Salvation ;
and guide our feet in-
to the way of Peace.
Amen.

The



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C O N T E N T S of the
severall Sections.

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ken of the
*Imposition of hands, yet
how important it is, and
ought to be esteemed,*
pag. 1.

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meant, Heb. 6. 2. name-
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The first part of the
book, which contains
the history of the
republic.

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origin of the
republic.

Book II. The
growth of the
republic.

Book III. The
decline of the
republic.

Book IV. The
fall of the
republic.

Book V. The
renewal of the
republic.

Book VI. The
present state of the
republic.

Book VII. The
future of the
republic.

The
first
part
of
the
book
contains
the
history
of
the
republic.



Imposition of Hands.

IT is no small wonder to me, that amongst all those great wits of the later times, that have so curiously pried into all the corners of Apostolicall Institutions and practises, I could meet with no one, that hath so much as taken notice of this, of the Imposition of Hands; which yet, all the while, lay so broad open before them, as that the Doctrine thereof is by the Apostle reckoned amongst the first Principles of Christian Religion: Is it for that men are unwilling to know some
 B Truths,

Hebr. 6.2.

1 Cor. 3.
10.

Truths, whose unpleasing consequences they would be loath to own? Or, is it that they are carried away with so high a prejudice against this practice, by reason of the extreme abuse of it, as that they are afraid to entertain any thoughts concerning it? However it be, certainly the Spirit of God hath not doubted to place this amidst the rank of the clearest and most concerning verities; and amongst such, as are essentially fundamentall to our Christian Profession; joyning it together with those main Principles of Faith, Repentance, Baptisme, Resurrection and Judgment: What shall we say then? Dare any Christian presume to say, that the Apostle, the great and wise Master-builder of the Church, mistook the foundation whereon he built? Or, dare any

any presumptuous soul single this one Article from the rest, as meerly temporary, when all the rest are granted to be of eternall use? Can there be any time wherein Faith, and Repentance from dead works, shall not be necessary, both for knowledge and practice? Can it be, that Baptisme should be ever out of date? Can the Doctrine of the Resurrection from the dead, and of the last Judgment, be ever unseasonable, and super-annated? How, or why then should that of Imposition of Hands, which is indivisibly marshalled with all these, by the blessed Apostle, be shuffled out from the rest, as arbitrary, and altogether unnecessary?

Taking it then for granted, *Sect. 2.* that the Apostle accounts the Doctrine & practice of the Im-

position of Hands, to be both of excellent use, and, as then, of great importance and necessity in the Church of God: Let us inquire, in the next place, what is meant by this so requisite Imposition, and of what kind it is. Besides that extraordinary act of laying on the hand for curing of diseases and infirmities, practised by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, and for conveying the Holy Ghost in a miraculous way; in the Primitive times there were three occasions and usages of Imposition of Hands; in cases of, 1. Confirmation, 2 of Ordination, 3. of Absolution & re-admission of Penitents. That the first of these is here intended, not only all Antiquity, but all late Interpreters (except some few Straglers) do unanimously agree: neither indeed
can

can it, with any probability, be taken of either of the other ; Not of Ordination : What should Novices have to do with that businesse now in the Primer of their Christianity? Their Teachers were only concerned herein, not the Puiſnes in that School of Chriſt : Not of re-admiſſion of Penitents, the ceremony whereof (for ought we can find) began not till after the Apoſtles: Doubtleſſe therefore of Confirmation ; for which cauſe alſo (as *Calvin* Calv. in locum. well noeth) it is paired together with Baptiſme, as an ordinary ſubſequent thereof: So as this practice thus hinted by the Apoſtle, and made good (as we ſhall hereafter ſhew) by the conſtant Tradition of all following times, is plainly derived, even by Mr. *Calvins* own confeſſion, from no leſſe then

Apostolicall Institution.

sect. 3. It hath been the lot of this sacred Rite to fall into ill hands, & to be foully wronged by a double extreme; the one, of Excesse; the other, of Defect.

The Excesse, in a superstitious over-doing, and over-valuing it; the Defect, in a neglective dis-estimation; both which must be clearly evicted and quit, ere we can present this holy Ordinance to the beholder, in its native beauty and perfection: First then, it is an injurious Excesse of respect that is given to Confirmation, by them, who have advanced it into the rank of Sacraments, forcing upon it that honour which it never originally affected, and which it utterly (with due modestie) refuseth to undergoe,

To

To make up a Christian Sacrament, Cardinall *Bellarmino* himself sticks not to professe three things to be necessarily required: First, a promise of Grace; Secondly, a sensible sign, together with a word, whereby that promise is applyed; Thirdly, a command from God, enjoining the ministration of it: Now after all his confident undertaking, where are all, where are any of these to be found in this businesse of Confirmation?

Bellarmino. de Sacram. Confirm. l. 1. c. 2. Sect. 2. Tria requiruntur.

For the promise, he tels us of the Comforter, whom our Lord Jesus pre-ingaged himself to send; and of that gracious word, at his last farewell, *Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:* But what is this to the particular act of Confirmation? All this might well have beene,

Act. 1. 8.

B. 4.

and

and yet no hands imposed, no Confirmation implied. Well might this promise confirm the Apostles in a confident expectation of some miraculous work to be wrought upon them, but could give no intimation of a new Sacrament to be erected; no specialty of their hands to be employed in an imposition: That distinction therefore of *Alphonsus Vivaldus*, that Christ instituted this Sacrament, though not, *exhibendo*, yet, *promittendo*, is no better then frivolous; unlesse he can shew, that our Saviour applied that generall promise to this speciall institution: which he shall never be able to perform.

For the sensible sign; here were hands indeed laid on, but not with any intention of acting or constituting a Sacrament:
And

*Vivald.
Candelab.
sur. de Sac.
Conf. Tit. 3.*

And where is the solemn Word whereby that promise is applyed, and that sign actuated? Surely, here, God is silent; men may speak: For that set form which they bind their tongues unto, *I sign thee with the sign of the crosse, and confirm thee with the chrisme of salvation, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost;* whose is it? They dare not father it upon Christ, who is the sole Author of Sacraments; it is a device of their own, and thereupon subject to much variation of expression, as their Casuists stick not to confesse.

As for any command, it is as far to seek, as either of the other: What Scripture can be pretended to carry the least colour of a *mandate*? It is a poor shift of the Cardinall, in stead of a word of injunction, to flap

*Pro man-
dato datus
illis manda-
ti executio-
nem.*

*De Sacr.
confirm. c. 2.*

us off with the execution of the act : It is true, hands were laid on by the Apostles, the Holy Ghost was given : but was this done with either purpose, or charge, to make this a perpetuall Sacrament unto the Church ? Or, if this were any where to be found, yet what were all this to the warrant of the rites used in the Church of *Rome*, in the administration of this pretended Sacrament ? Wherein, as if the Apostles act were quite forgotten, there is no Imposition of hands at all, only some strange and uncouth rites are foisted in, which the Apostles were never guilty of thinking of : For in what Scripture shall we look for the Chrisme compounded (as it needs must be) of oyl and balsame ? Where shall we look for the consignation with the crosse

croffe in the forehead? for the
box on the ear given to the
confirmed, with the rest of
the complements of that pre-
tendedly-Sacramentall action?
So as now the Cardinall may
spread before us the testimonies
of *ten Popes, nine Councils, nine*
Greek Fathers, ten Latin, besides
middle aged Authors and
School-men, for the avowing
of this their Sacrament, and the
antiquity of the holy appen-
dances of it: but all these fall
too short for the proof of a true
and genuine Sacrament of the
Christian Church; a truth that
was well seen by the quick and
piercing eyes of our *Alexander*
of *Hales*, the Father of the
Schoolmen, whom they styled,
the Irrefragable Doctor, and
the fountain of life: As also, by
his acute Disciple, Cardinall *Bo-*
naventure, whom they have ho-
noured

Bellarmin.
ubi supra.

Alex. Hal-
ensis. part. 4.
qu. 24.
Sixtus Se-
nensis. l. 4.
Bibliotheca.
Sanct.
Poss. Appar.
Sacr.

noured with the title of a Saint; both which flatly deny any such Sacrament instituted by Christ, or so much as by his Apostles; sending us for the first rise of it, to a French Council held at *Melde*, which was not till the year of grace, 845. So as the Roman Catechisme, which from the counterfeited authority of their *Fabian*, would cast their holy Chrisme upon Christ himself; and *Scotus*, who yet suffers for stooping so low, as to fetch it from the Apostles, are quite beside the cushion.

Seet. 4.

Confirmat.

Sacramen-

tum equo

sacrosan-

ctum ac ipse

Baptismus.

Catechif.

Austriac.

Yet a far more injurious degree of Excesse it is, that Confirmation is not only ranged together with the holy Sacraments, but also equalled, and (not without an high and intolerable affront) preferred to Baptisme.

Baptisme it self: Not so much in respect of the dignity of the person, whose hand was wont to be imployed in this action, (held commonly, and of old, in a key above Presbyterie, or as *Primus Presbyterorum*, in the lowest style) as of the vertue and efficacy of the act it self; without which, the eminence of the agent could avail little to the dignifying of the work: We know, the very Angels are content to condescend to mean offices, for the good of us, wretched men; yet those acts to which they have stooped, have been never the more ennobled in themselves: And if an Emperour shall be designed to hold a Popes stirrop, the act is never the lesse servile, because the Agent is royall: It is not for us, in this case, to stand upon the person; to whom, if it were

*Lib. Sacra-
rum Cerem.*

were appropriated of old , as *Hierome* speaks , *propter honorem Sacerdotii* , I fear it is now , by some , denied , *propter invidiam Sacerdotii* ; the case is herein much altered : Once men could have been content , with the *Galatians* , to have pull'd out their own eies , and to have given them to us : but in these last times , too many could be content to lose *one* of their *own* eies , that we might lose *both ours* : however , it were great pity and sin , that so holy an act should lye still , as dead , whiles we strain courtesy who should take it up . But it is not , as I said , so much the dignity of the agent that is insisted upon , as the power and energie of the act of Confirmation , which is by our Romish Doctors set up , proudly to contest with , and over-top the acknowledged Sacra-

Sacrament of Baptisme; If Baptisme be yeilded to begin our Christendom, Confirmation, they say, perfects it; and all the praises which they, from their Urban, Melchiades, Clemens, Fabian, and others, yeild unto their Confirmation, are understood (as Chemnitius well construes them) as Antitheticall; so many derogations from the power of Baptisme: In Baptisme, say they, we are regenerated to life; in Confirmation, we are armed to fight: In Baptisme, there is only preparation made for Gods in-dwelling in our hearts; in Confirmation, he actually takes up the house-room for himself: Yea, in flat tearms, they dare say, He shall never be a Christian, that is not anointed by Episcopall Confirmation; and it is the title of one of the Chapters of their Decretum,

Ut pleni
Christiani
inveniantur.
Decret. de
consec. D. S.
cap. Omnes
fideles.
Chemnit.
exam. conc.
Trid. cap. de
confirmas.

Quia nun-
quam erit
Christianus
nisi confir-
matione E-
piscopali
fuerit Chris-
matus.
Decret. de
Consecr. cap.
sejuni.

Manus

Manus im-
positionis
Sacramen-
tum dignius
est Sacr.
Baptismi.
cap: de his.
ibid.

Majore ve-
neratione
veneran-
dum &c.
ibid.

Viz. Corn-
wall and
Devon.

Manus impositionis sacr. &c.
*The Sacrament of the imposition
of hands is more worthy then the
Sacrament of Baptisme.*

These, and whatever other
excesses of Titles and Preroga-
tives, have been cast upon this
holy Institution, to the dispa-
ragement of other more noble
Ordinances, have not a little
blemished the face of it, in some
undistinguishing eies. To which
may be added the over-eager
and tumultuous affectation,
wherewith it was wont, not ve-
ry long since, to be prosecuted
in some parts (the Western e-
specially) of this Church. It
cannot be spoken, with what
fervour, and violence of desire,
that people were wont to sue
for this sacred ceremony: What
Fair-like confluences have we
there seen of zealous ambients?
How have we been tired with
the

the importunity of Suitors, impatient of either deniall, or delay? How have we been oppressed with the throngs of the multitude, striving for the first admission? Insomuch, as we have been forced to call for the help of Officers to our rescue from that well-meant impetuousnesse? Yea, so hath that people been formerly devoted to this religious institution, that the want of it was one of the causes of their insurrection in the daies of King *Edward* the sixth; falling out, as then, by reason of the absence, or willing forbearance, of *Miles Coverdale*, their elected Bishop.

Now I must be pardoned, if I impute some part of this height of zeal in those our modern Clients, to an ungrounded over-weening of opinion, which they have conceived of this
godly

godly Ordinance traduced unto them by their fore-fathers; whereof, if need were, I could give too sufficient an account to the Reader: an errour, which by good counsel, might in good time be redressed.

Sect. 5.

But leaving the consideration of an excessive over-valuation, whereof (I dare undertake) the greatest part of this Nation, at this day, are far enough from being guilty: we descend to that other extreme, of defect; whereof, I fear, there are not too many free: What an universall neglect is there of this holy duty in all the Churches that professe Reformation? What a willing forgetfulness of it? as if there had never been any such matter practised in the Church of God, never any such ceremony so much

much as intimated by any Apostle, never any mention or memory of it in the succeeding ages; lastly, as if there never had been, never could be, any profitable or godly use of it amongst Christians.

Yea rather on the contrary, how odious is the very name of it grown to the ears of those, who professe the strictest godlinesse? How is the practice of it cryed down, and hooted at, as meerly superstitious and Antichristian? Who can but wonder at this strange partiality? that men who professe so awe-full an observance, and so strict and punctuall imitation of all the Apostolicall Ordinations and actions, should willingly abandon, and carelessly slight one of their prime, and most apparent institutions? Faine would I know what they can say

*Hierrespe-
xit ad usi-
tatem Ca-
techism. for-
mulam. Cal-
viv. in Heb.
6. 2.*

say to this irrefragable text ? Was there not such a thing, in the Apostolick times, as the Imposition of hands ? Was not the Doctrine and practice of it held so usefull, as that it was singled out for one of the Principles of Christian Religion ? Is there not as much occasion and need of the use of it, as ever ? Was this only a temporary Institution, soon after to be abrogated ? What need was there then to trouble the heads, and to clog the Catechisme of Christian novices with a vanishing, and now already-gasping Ceremony ? And why is it ranked in the style of Faith, Repentance, Baptisme, &c. whose use and practice must be perpetuall ? Surely to coop up the Doctrine of Baptisme, and Imposition of hands, in a Parenthesis, as some have

have poorly devised, is both very unreasonable, and injurious to the Spirit of God, which would have this Scripture to run freely, in all equall relations, to the fore-going and following clauses: what God will have laid open, it is high presumption in any man to enclose.

That the Apostles laid their *sect. 6.* hands on persons formerly baptized, and hereby conveyed unto them the Holy Ghost, is so clear a truth, as none durst ever deny: But did not this priviledge rest only in them, and die with them? As it could not be bought and sold, according to the profane and sacrilegious offer of the wicked forcerer; so, could it be bequeathed unto, and scoffed upon their holy Successors? Surely, we
hear

Matth. 28.
20.

hear our blessed Saviour, at his parting, say, *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world:* Those blessed men to whom these cordial words were spoken, were not to stay long in the world: not to their persons therefore, but to their succession, was this promise both made and verified.

Not in respect to those miraculous gifts, which as persons extraordinary, they both had, and conferred (in this singular qualification they neither had, nor could have any Successors in the following times) but in respect to those better graces, which, as Predecessours to the ordinary Pastours, and Overseers of the Church, their Ministry should convey to the souls of Gods people. Here-upon it is, that their Successors do justly claim a true right to this

this Divine priviledge, and find a just warrant for their Imposition of hands : For the effectuall performance whereof, yet, they challenge not any power, by an inherent vertue in themselves, or by any authoritative bequest from, or to others, but only in an humble way of impetration, by their faithfull prayers, which are the life of that holy Ceremony, according to the practice of the Apostles themselves; who, though miraculously gifted, yet aided still their hand with their tongue, devoutly suing for what they intended to give: Let no man therfore pretend, that because the miraculous effects of the Apostolicall Imposition of hands are long since ceased, therfore the act is now idle and uselesse. Divine Institutions are ill-measured by sensible opera-

*Gregorius his
Vindicat.*

Heb. 6. &

Ast. 8.

Pexelii

resp. ad Ca-

echis. Trid.

cap. de con-

firmit.

operations: There are spirituall and indivisible fruits of holy Ordinances, which (as being most proper for them) shall be perpetually produced by them, through the blessing of the Almighty) even when there is no appearance of any outward efficiency.

*August. l. 3.
de Baptif-
mo, c. 16.*

Such are they which proceed from the Imposition of sacred and authorized hands, if the judgment of a learned Father, and eminent Saint, may find place with us; *It is not now, saith he, as it was, that by the testimony of temporall and sensible miracles, the Holy Ghost is by the imposition of hands given, as formerly it was, for the commendation and better setting forth of the then new-moulded faith, and for the enlargement of the new-begun Church: For who doth now expect, that those, upon whom*

whom hands are imposed for the receiving of the Holy Ghost, should suddenly begin to speak with tongues? but invisibly and secretly by the bond of peace is the love of God conceived to be thus inspired into their hearts.

The instance that *Bellarmino* himself gives to this purpose is Bellar.de Confirmat. lib. 2. c. 2. *In the beginnings of the Church those that believed wrought miracles,* as our Saviour foretold his Apostles; now that effect hath long ceased; shall we therefore say that Faith is vain and forcelesse? farre be it from us so to flounder that Divine grace, which still and ever exercises a more excellent power in the Believer, in that it quickneth him to a new life; according to that of the Prophet, *The just shall live by Faith.* Although
C then

then we presume not to affect the working of wonders by the imposing of our hands upon the heads of the baptized ; yet why should we not dare to hope that the solemn laying on of approved hands , seconded by our fervent prayers, shall help to work an increase of grace in the hearts of capable Receivers ?

Now if any man shall think fit to match *this imposition of hands* upon the baptized , with *the anointing the sick with oyl*,
 Jam. 5. 14. mentioned by the Apostle ; which being both used , and required in the Primitive times, had doubtlesse a soveraign effect ; but now the power of healing being lost , is no better then a purposelesse and vain ceremony : let him know there is a great difference to be put betwixt both these , that oyl was professedly intended and used for

for a bodily cure onely; receiving its vertue from a power above that of nature; and therefore justly ranged amongst those primitive miracles, which continued not Ages in the Church; whereas the imposition of hands was directed to Spirituall ends, and such as were of eternall use and benefit; to which may be added, that the doctrine of *anointing with oyl* had never the honour to be numbred amongst Christian principles, which yet is yeilded to *the imposition* of hands by the great Herald of the Church.

Had the Apostle onely by *sect. 7.*
the way so let fall the mention
of imposition of hands, that no
further noise had been after-
wards made of it in the
Church of Christ, it might
C 2 per-

perhaps have been supposed some occasionall ceremony not intended for perpetuity; but now, when we find the continuation of both the precept and practice, in the immediately-succeeding times, deducing it self through all the ages of the Church, (though lateward not without some taint of superstitious interspersions, which are easily wip'd away) we have reason to think it was never destin'd to an abrogation: *Clemens* the fellow-labourer to the Apostles, in that Epistle which he writes to his Disciples, *Julius*, and *Julianus*, makes an honourable commendation of it to all Christians, charging them to *hasten both their Baptisme and Confirmation*, by reason of the great uncertainty of the time of their dissolution; attributing to it the
con-

Clem. Ep.
4. Julio &
Juliano.

conveyance of the seven-fold
 grace of the Holy Spirit to the
 receiver. I may not conceal
 that the credit of this Epistle
 amongst the rest hath under-
 gone question, (which indeed
 none of his letters have escaped
 (as is confessed by *Eusebius*)
 save onely that to the *Corin-*
thians now lately published)
 but not to stand upon *Turria-*
nus his terms of Apologie; I
 must needs say, this one carries
 simplicity in the face of it; pas-
 sing under no other style then
 of *Clemens* Bishop of the city
 of *Rome*; and, that if the autho-
 rity of it be suspected, yet the
 age cannot, so as if not authen-
 ticall, yet it is not denyed to be
 exceeding ancient.

Clemens
urbis Romae
Episcopus.

That story is famous which
 is reported by *Eusebius* from
Clemens of *Alexandria*, concer-
 ning the young man whom

Euseb. hist.
Eccles. l. 3.
c. 20.

Saint *Iohn* the Apostle, after his return from *Pathmos* delivered and doubly recommended to the carefull custody of a grave Bishop, under a vehement adjuration; the Bishop (saith that ancient and unquestionable Author) received the young man to his charge, trained him up in his house, and at last * christned him; and after that proceeded yet to such height of diligent observance of him, as that for a singular preservative, he added moreover to him the obsignation with the seal of the Lord: (to wit, *his Confirmation*) who yet proving afterward miserably debauched, was by the Apostle graciously reclaimed.

Not to take in our way the *Diony. Eccl.* full testimonies of *Dennis* the *bicrar.* 6. 2. *Arcopagite*, and *Origen*; that of *Tertullian* is most clear, the flesh is

is over-shadowed with the imposition of the hand, that the soul may be illightned by the spirit. And elsewhere; Then is the hand laid on by that benediction, calling in, and inviting the Holy Ghost: How frequent his Scholar the blessed Martyr *Cyprian* is in the report of this practice, no man that hath turn'd over his Epistles can be ignorant: And that no man may say these (if hundreds more such) are but single witnessses; the Councell of *Arles* in the time of *Constantine* the great, consisting (as *Binius* numbers them) of two hundred, or as *Ado* in his Chronicle of six hundred Bishops, ordaines, That if any shall return to the Church from their former heresie, they shall be examined concerning the Articles of their Creed; and if it be

Orig. hom. 8. in Levit.

Tertul. de resur. carnis & lib. de Baptismo.

Concil: A-relat. sub Sylvestro. Can. 8.

found that they have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; hands shall be onely laid upon them, that they may receive the Holy Ghost.

But to what purpose should I presse my Reader with throngs of witnesses, when all those testimonies which are mis-alledged by Romish Authors, whether of Councils, or Fathers, or Docters, to prove their Confirmation a Sacrament, yet cannot be denyed thus much validity, as to prove there hath ever been a confirmation. If they have unjustly contended to impose a wrong title upon the imposition of hands, yet it is no lesse clear that there was imposition, then that there were hands to be imposed; and if they have palpably corrupted that
whol-

wholsom institution with the inter-mixtures of their own mis-becomming devises, this can be no more prejudice to the true Originall purity of it, then it can derogate from a beautiful face, that it was once besmear'd with a foul liniment; wipe off the filth, and the face is still it self. It is true, that some of their additionall Ceremonies came in betimes, but late enough to disprove their pedigree from any Apostolique authority; others of them (as clapping on the cheek the crosse of the thumb, treading on the toe, filleting the forehead for seven dayes, and the like) may justly seem to be no lesse vain then new; and to serve onely to confirme us in the lightnesse and indiscretion of their founders: Casting aside therefore all those fopperies.

wherewith time, and weak Superstition have clogged this Holy Ordinance; Let us look at it in that native (and there-upon most comely) simplicity wherein it passed from the hands of the blessed Apostles, and in that plaine and holy dresse, wherein they, by the guidance of the good Spirit of God, (wherewith they were inspired) left it to the entertainment of the ensuing world.

Sect. 8. That our Saviour laid his sacred hands on the Children, that were brought unto him, in way of benediction, and that his Apostles laid their hands on Persons that had been Baptized for conferring on them the Holy Ghost, it is most evident; neither can it be doubted, but that their Successours in the Pastoral Charge of the Church laid their hands likewise upon the

Acts 8:

Acts 19.

the formerly Baptized; otherwise, (had not this been familiarly known both in the Practice, and use of it.) Imposition of hands had never been recorded for a point of the Ancient Catechisme of Christs Church: The succeeding hands then were also imposed; but to what purpose? Surely no Man can think the end of this act could in them be other then Holy, & Spirituall; as they in their calling succeeded those Prime Founders of the Church, so this act also succeeded theirs: though not in giving the visible Graces of the Spirit (which in the was miraculous) yet in obtaining an increase of invisible Grace to the Receiver, as theirs also more effectually did: For certainly, we shall grossly mistake this whole act, if we shall conceive it to have been onely

Neophy-
torum 10.

501 Χείρα,

67.

Arerius
locum.

Tradeban-
tur ergo i-
sta catechis-
mi initia

brevibus &
paucis tan-

quam pra-
cipua: reli-

gionis no-
stra: capit

Bez. in
Heb. 6. 2.

a dumb or dead Ceremony, completed in the motion of an Hand, and touch of an Head; there was withall a life, and vigour put into it by the zealous Prayer of the godly Pastor, and Congregation, which might not returne to him without a Blessing; Neither was it otherwise of old; When the Patriarch *Jacob* laid his hands upon *Ephraim*, and *Manasses* Head, it was not without a fervent apprecation; God, before whom my Fathers, *Abraham* and *Isaac* did walk, the God which fed me all my life-long unto this day, the Angell which redeemed me from all evill, blesse the Lads. It was not the bare hand of *Moses* laid upon *Joshua* that could replenish him with the spirit of Wisdome without his Prayers: Yea, our blessed Saviour himself,

Gen. 48.

15, 16, 17.

Deut 34.3

self, to whom all power was Mar. 7. 34.
 given in Heaven, and in Earth,
 when he touched the dumb
 Man, and said, *Ephatah*; he
 lookt up into Heaven, as thence
 fetching his Cure: The Apo-
 stles, when the seaven-Elected
 Deacons were presented un-
 to them, did not without so-
 lemn Prayer, lay their hands A&. 6. 6.
 upon them: When *Barnabas*
 and *Saul* were separated by the
 charge of the holy Ghost, to
 the great worke of God, to
 which they were Designed,
 Hands were laid on them, but A&. 13. 3.
 withall, Prayers were made for
 them. So in this very case,
 when the Baptized *Samaritans*
 should be confirmed by *Peter* A&. 8. 15.
 and *John*, their hands were laid
 on with Prayers. These, these
 are they which gave Virtue to
 the Hands; which certainly
 without these, being but Flesh,
 could

could have no Spirituall Operation upon the Soul; but being thus seconded, could not but be available to the furtherance of Grace in the Receiver.

Cypr. de
hæreticis
baptizan-
dis ad Ju-
baianum.

This is the practice which Holy *Cyprian* tells was successfully continued in the Church; who speaking of the *Samaritans* Baptized by *Philip*, and confirmed afterwards by the Prayers, and Imposition of the Hands of the forementioned Apostles, addes (*Quod nunc quoque, &c.*) which is still (saith he) practised amongst us, That those, which are Baptized in the Church, are by the Governors of the Church presented unto us, and by our Prayers, and laying on of our Hands receive the holy Ghost, &c. It is utterly needlesse to cite any further proof of this Point, or any particular.

particular Attestation to the act of Confirmation, done with great consent, and allowance in the Primitive times; when S. Jerom in his Dialogue against the Luciferians; having said, That by the imposition of Authorized hands, the holy Ghost was still conveyed to the Baptized; addes; Dost thou ask me where this is written? In the Acts of the Apostles; but if there were no Authority of Scripture at all for it, the consent of the whole world to this point, might well challenge the force of a precept: Thus he. Since therefore it is undeniably certaine, that after the miraculous Gifts were ceased, yet still this practice of Imposition of hands was, with the generall approbation of the Christian Church, continued to succeeding Ages; I ask when, and why it ceased? Have we any

Hieron. Dialog. adversus Lucifer.
Cited also by Bellarm. de Confirmation. l. 2.

was

warrant for banishing it out of the Church of God? Have we any just ground of reason to forbear, and discontinue the use of it? Have we lesse need of Grace, or Confirmation then our Forefathers? Or, is the power of Gods Ordinance abated, and now languisheth with Age? Or, are we lesse qualified to performe this gracious act then our Predecessours? Surely, the Church of *England* which (to Her eternall praise and honour be it spoken) hath ever been studiously carefull to maintaine all Apostolicall constitutions and practises, above all Her Reformed Sisters hath not failed to hold out this Holy Ordinance, and to recommend it in the most Ancient, Simple, and Inoffensive Forme to all Her obedient Children: Neither doe

we finde that the present times (though too full of Distraction and Quarrell) have ever declared any Opposition to, or Dislike of that never-interrupted, never-disallowed Institution: so as we have just reason to think, that it both should, and doth continue in its full right and vigour.

But lest the discontinuance of *Sect. 9.* the act, together with some prejudice of the otherwise affected, should have worne out of the mindes of Men the Memory of that Laudable and Godly Practise, it will not be amisse to recall unto our thoughts, the Wise and Exemplary Order wherein that Holy Rite was injoynd to be administered.

First therefore, having removed away all the trash of Superstitious,

stitious, and frivolous Appendances, as the Crosse, the Chrisme, the Stripe, the Fillet, and the rest; as aiming onely at the Originall simplicity of that Religious Ceremony:

Secondly, having removed away all opinion of a Sacrament, (for which the Church of *Rome* hath unjustly struggled) and therewith disclaimed all derogation from the power and vertue of Baptisme:

And thirdly, having solemnly professed against the misconceit of an absolute necessity of this rite to Salvation in them, which die after Baptisme, before hands can be laid upon them; the Church of *England* hath piously ordered the Imposition of hands so to be Administred, as may be to the greater edification of those that are to receive it; and therefore
hath

hath ordained that none should be confirmed but such as can give account of having learned the Articles of the Faith, the Lords Prayer, the Ten Commandements, and that initiatory Catechisme, which is purposely appointed for their preparation; wherein this Church hath judiciously, and not without good ground both of Reason & Religion, reformed that common Errour and Abuse of the Church of *Rome*, which commonly casts away their Confirmation upon Babes in the Cradle of their first infancy; For though some of their Doctors are willing to limit this act unto the age of their puberty, which is the twelfth year; others to the seventh; that so the Child may at least remember (though yet he understand not) what was done to him;

*Concil.
Aurelian.*

Vivald. ubi
supra.
Cassand.
Consultat.
de Confirm.

Bellar. l. 2.
de Confir.
c. 7. sect.
ult.

him ; yet the most are of opinion, that there is no cause to deferre their Confirmation till they come to the use of Reason ; and doe practise accordingly ; so as *Alphonfus Vivaldus* tells us that commonly in Spaine, all Children of two, or three years old, are wont to be confirmed ; and *Petrus a Soto* and *Cassander* professes it to have beene the ancient Order of the Church, that forthwith after their Baptisme, Children should also receive their Confirmation: In which point I cannot but allow the moderate determination of *C. Bellarmine* ; who tells us, that when persons of ripe Age come to be Baptized, the same day, together with Baptisme they receeive both Confirmation, and Eucharist ; but when they are Baptized, being Infants, the other two are justly

justly deferred till the Receiver attaines to the use of reason ; since (as he truly resolves) neither of them are necessary for Infants, and both of them are received with more fruit, and greater reverence , by those which are come to a mature Age.

But though he come home to us in matter of time, yet the Church of *England* goes beyond him in the qualification of the persons, in whom he (as holding Grace given by the very work wrought) professes not to require that measure of knowledge and preparation, which we cal for, & presuppose in those who shall be admitted to the Imposition of our hands; upon this ground, that the Ancients stood not upon Catechismes and Examinations in the laying on of their hands in
the

the Primitive times, but conferred their Confirmation upon Infants; whereat no man can wonder, that knowes they were also wont of Old (upon a weake misprision) to cram the blessed Eucharist into the mouthes of Infants; to the due participation whereof notwithstanding, we know a competent measure of knowledge, and self-examination ought to be required; doubtless if a meet time be fit to be stood upon, much more a meetability of understanding; so as in this point, I may safely appeal to any well-informed conscience, whether the Church of England have not chosen the better part, and with great judgement reformed a palpable defect in the Roman profession.

Seet. 10 And certainly, the considerations

tions whereupon this Church professeth to be led into this just and pious resolution are such, as may well become the gravity and godly care of our gracious Mother; which the Rubrick thus expresseth: First, because that when Children come to the yeers of discretion, and have learn'd what their God-fathers and God-mothers promised for them in Baptisme, they may then themselves with their own mouth, and with their own consent openly before the Church ratifie and confirm the same; and also promise that by the grace of God, they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe and keep such things as they by their own mouth

Liturgy of
the Church
of Eng-
land.
Rubrick
before
Confir-
mation.

*Non nisi a-
dultiore æ-
tate ut fiat
nil prohibet
hanc ob cau-
sam ut pa-
rentibus,
susceptoribus & Ec-
clesiarum
præfectis
detur occasio*

*pueros de fide quã in Baptismo professi sunt diligentius insti-
tuendi & admonendi. Cassand. Consult. c. de Confirmat.*

and

and confession have assented unto.

Secondly, for as much as Confirmation is ministred to them that be baptized, that by imposition of hands and prayer they may receive strength and defence against all temptations to sin, and the assaults of the world and the Devill; it is most meet to be administred when Children come to that age, that partly by the frailty of their own flesh, partly by the assaults of the world and the Devill, they begin to be in danger to fall into sundry kinds of sin.

Thirdly, for that it agreeth with the usage of the Church in times past, whereby it was ordained that Confirmation should be ministred to them that were of perfect age, that they being instructed in
Christ

Christs religion, should openly professe their own faith, and promise to be obedient to the will of God.

Now let any Reader, let any Adversary say, whether any determination could be more holly-rationall, or more evidently conducing to the furthering of the welfare and salvation of Christian soules, in this case, then this which our Mother the Church of England hath upon sad and serious deliberation fixed upon; which if it had been accordingly executed, with that constant care and fidelity as it ought, would certainly have prevented many foul and monstrous exorbitances in matter of Doctrine, and many horrible enormities in the practice of mens lives; with both which we are now miserably pestred and over-run.

D

When

When the party then is upon due examination, found fit both for age and knowledge, he is to be in due season presented to the imposition of hands; which is ordained to be performed with such holy comlineffe and such vigor of devotion, as (be it spoken without envy) the Church of England may be herein well proposed as a pattern to all the Christian Churches in the world; doubtlesse if there be any Church under heaven that hath continued the Apostolicall institution and practise of the imposition of hands in the native simplicity and purity thereof, it is the Church of England.

*Imposition
of hands
with pray-
er, which
was the old
and pure ce-
remonie of
Confirmati-
on.*

Fulk in
Rhem.
Act. 8.

But that we may not think the Church of England (though more eminent in this point then her other sisters) goes

goes alone in her judgement and practise of Confirmation, by imposition of hands, let us see the free and full astipulation of other famous Divines and Churches to her, in both these.

Philip Melancthon, as in behalf of the Churches of Saxonie, hath thus: *In ritu Confirmationis fiebat &c.* In the rite of Confirmation there was of old an explication of doctrine; wherein every one was to recite the summe of Christian Doctrine, and openly to professe his detestation of all both heathen and Hereticall phrensies; and that he will be, and ever remain, a true member of the Church, and not depart from the true belief which he then professed. This custome was profitable both for the instruction of men, and for the retai-

Melanct. Confess. Saxoniarum Eccles. cap. de Confirmatione.

ning of them in the true acknowledgement of God, and his truth.

Mat: Flac. *Flac. Illyricus* thus: *Porro*
Illyr. Gloss. *autem impositionem manuum &c.*
in Hebr. 6.

But further also, they had wont of old in the beginnings of the Church to use imposition of hands after a more accurate instruction in the Catechisme, with publick and fervent prayer, that they might obtain for them the grace of the Holy Ghost, as we read it was done to the Samaritanes, *Acts 8*. And I believe that so they were wont in the Primitive Church to remove those which were novices, from the *Catechumeni*, to the rank of those auditors which were allowed to be of greater maturity; that so now it might be lawfull for them, (as those that were judged worthy) to partake

take of the holy Communion.

Learned *Chemnitius*, as for Chemnit.
the Protestant Churches in ge- Exam. Con-
nerall thus. *Nostri saepe ostende-* cil. Trident.
runt &c. Our Doctors have de Confir-
often shewed, that the Rite of mat.
Confirmation might very well
(setting aside those unprofitable
& Superstitious traditions, and
indeed such as are contrary to
the Scriptures) be thus made use
of; even according to the con-
sent of the holy Scripture; viz:
That those which are Baptized
in their infancy (for such is
now the estate of the Church)
when they come to the yeers of
discretion, should be diligently
instructed in a certain and sim-
ple Catechisme of the doctrine
of the Church. And when they
shall be thought to have in
some good sort attained to the
understanding of those Princi-
ples, that then they should be

presented to the Bishop and the Church ; and there the child which was Baptized in his infancy , should first by a short and plain admonition be put in mind of his Baptisme ; where-with, how, why, and into what he was Baptized, what in that Baptisme the whole Trinity conferred upon him , and sealed unto him ; namely, the covenant of Peace , and the compact of Grace ; how that there he made a publique renouncing of Satan , a profession of his faith, and a promise of holy obedience, Secondly, that the child himself should before the Congregation make a proper and publique profession of this Doctrine & Faith. Thirdly, that being interrogated of the chief points of Christian Religion, he should give answer to them al; & if he fail in his understanding

ing of any of them, he should be better instructed in them. Fourthly, he should be admonished, and by this profession should declare, that he utterly dissents from all heathen, hereticall, phanaticall and profane opinions. Fifthly, that there should be added a grave and serious exhortation out of the word of God, that he persevere in that Covenant which he hath made in Baptisme, and in that Faith, and Doctrine which he hath there professed. Sixtly, that publique prayer be made for those children, that God by his holy Spirit would vouchsafe to govern, conserve, and confirm them in this profession. At which prayer, without all superstition, Imposition of hands may be used: Neither would such a prayer be in vain; for it is grounded upon the

promises made of the gift of perseverance, and the grace of Confirmation.

Such a fashion of Confirmation would yeeld much profit to the edification both of the younger sort, and of the whole Church, and would be *agrecable both to the Scripture and to purer Antiquity*: For in the Apostolicall imposition of hands that there was an exploration of Doctrine, and a profession of Faith, the history doth manifestly witnesse *Act. 19.* Of the exhortation to perseverance, and Confirmation by the word in the Doctrine and Faith once professed; there are examples of the Apostolike Church *Act. 14, 15, and 18.* And that publique prayer was used, the History testifies *Act. 8.* So also of the examination and profession of Faith and

and Doctrine in Confirmation, the seventh Canon of the councill of *Laodicea*, and the eighth Canon of the councill of *Arles* do sufficiently speak. Thus he.

Reader, I have thus at large transcribed the testimony of this worthy Author; for that it gives both so full an attestation to the solemn Confirmation hitherto used in the Church of *England*; and withall layes forth the grounds of this holy practise fetch'd from the blessed Apostles, and from Scripture it self: Judge now, whether there could be a better Commentary upon that form which our godly forefathers have transmitted unto us, and our Church hath lately both prescribed, and recommended her dutifull Children.

Dr. Nic.
Hemingi-
us Syntag.
c. 22.
e. *Votum*,

Hemingius that great light of
Denmark for his own judge-
ment, and the *Danish* Chur-
ches, hath thus: *Purior Ecclesia*
secuta Apost. tempora &c.
The purer Churches follow-
ing the Apostles times, when
the children of Christians be-
gan to be Baptized, had this
fashion: That the children be-
ing instructed in the Cate-
chisme, should be publicquely
brought forth into the sight of
the Bishops, and there be inter-
rogated concerning the Arti-
cles of their Faith; and should
there with their own voice con-
firm the vow that was in their
name made in their Baptisme;
and that action, from a part of
it was termed Confirmation;
and that whole action consisted
of an examination, a solemn
Confirmation of the vow made
in Baptisme, the Prayer of the
Bi-

Bishop, and the imposition of hands.

This custome was exceeding profitable, and conduced much to the retaining of their former confession and concord; for neither was it easily found that any man would depart from that Doctrine which he had by his solemn vow ratified and confirmed: And soon after, In our Churches, saith he, the substance of the ancient Confirmation is retained, all Popish superstitions being abolished: For our Bishops in their visitations do publicly examine the younger sort in the Articles of their Faith, and in the Doctrine of the Sacraments, and do then confirm them in the same by instruction and exhortations.

For the judgement of the French Church both concerning

ning the ancient use of Confirmation, and of the laudable practice of it for the present; we need no other witnesses then he, who is the just glory of it, Mr. *Calvin*, who tels us : *Hic mos olim fuit &c.* This was the manner of old, that the children of Christians, after they were grown up to some good age, were presented before the Bishop, that they might fulfill that duty which was required of those who at a riper age offered themselves to Baptisme ; for they sate amongst those that were appointed to be Catechized, till they being rightly instructed in the mysteries of Faith, could be able before the Bishop and the People to render a confession of their belief. Upon the ending of their child-hood, or in the entring
of

Calvin *In-*
stit. l. 4.
c. 19.

of their youth, they were again by their Parents brought to the Bishop, and were examined by the Bishop according to that form of Catechisme which they then had, which was both certain and common: And that this action, which ought otherwise in it self worthily to be held grave and holy, might carry in it so much the more reverence and dignity; there was also therein used the Ceremony of the imposition of hands; so the child, after the approbation of his belief professed, was dismissed with a solemn blessing: Thus he.

And could that eminent Author, if he had been retained Advocate for the Church of *England*, better have set forth her fashion of confirming, and her perfect conformity herein to the ancient Apostolicall practice?

Justly

Calvin.
Com. in
Hebr. 6.

Justly may I call it so, by warrant of the same Author, who commenting upon this Text of the *Hebrews*, hath thus, *Transacta infantia &c.* Their infancy past over, being instructed in their belief, they offered themselves to Catechizing; but then another symbole or sign was used, which was the imposition of hands: This one place, saith he, abundantly testifies that the Originall of this Ceremonie was derived from the Apostles. Lastly, that it may appear how well he approved this practice; *Nos quoque &c.* we also could well and worthily wish, that this rite were restored to the Church every where; whereby children after the publique confession of their Faith made, might be offered up to God; and this would be a well-beseeming ag-

Calvin de
vera Refor-
mandæ Ec-
clesiæ rati-
one.

approbation of their Catechizing.

And yet more fully in his Institutions thus, *Utinam verò* Calvin Instit. l. 4. c. 19. *morem hunc.* Would to God we might retain that fashion which I admonished you formerly was used amongst the ancient Christians, before this abortive counterfeit of a Sacrament sprang up; that there should be a Catechisme of all the heads of Religion, which without all controversie are agreed upon &c.

That the child at ten yeers of age should tender himself to give a publique confession of his Faith, &c.

This Discipline, if it were at this day in force, there would be amongst Christian people a greater agreement in matter of Faith; neither would there be so great ignorance and
rude-

rudeneſſe as is amongſt many; neither would ſome be ſo readily carried away with new and ſtrange Doctrines; thus he.

Tell me now Reader, whether in the judgement of this eminent Divine (whoſe authority is juſtly wont to ſway ſo much with all Reformed Churches) we have not great reaſon to plead for the continuance and inforcement of holy Confirmation, and to bleſſe God for the guiding of our wiſe predeceſſors into thoſe ſafe wayes which others complain to have miſſed; and earneſtly to deſire that this Religious and beneficiall action might be ſo reverently and zealouſly performed, as may moſt conduce to the edification of Gods Church.

To the carefull indeavour *Seet. 12*
whereof, though I might urge
many motives, yet I shall take
up with these following; not
more few in number, then con-
siderable in weight.

The First shall be the agree-
ment and confederation, both
in judgement and practice with
the Primitive Church: to
whose example, doubtlesse, the
nearer we draw, the more we
shall approach towards purity
and perfection.

Now by the confession of
all Divines, both Romish and
Reformed, there was a Confir-
mation by imposition of hands
in all the first ages of the
Church, and that the manner
of performing it was the true
pattern of ours, I appeal to the
witness of those Protestant
Authors, which I have former-
ly cited, and am ready if need
were

were, to second it with many more: And why, my dear Brethren, should we think it fit or safe to leave so gracious an example, and to walk alone in our own wayes, untracked, untrodden with the holy feet of our first and surest guides? where the practice began sensibly to degenerate, in adulterating the Ordinance with Superstitious additions, both of rites and opinions, there we have justly declined it, and do with the zealous professors cry down the grosse abuse of that godly institution to the pit of hell, whence certainly it came: But shall we upon this pretence cast off that gracious act of Religion which was sent us from Heaven by the hands of the Apostles? What if we cannot second our Imposition of hands with sensible wonders as the
the

the Apostles did? (else, as *Oecumenius* well observes, *Simon Magus* could not have seen that the Holy Ghost was given by them) though we cannot work miracles, yet we can pray; and our prayers have the same Spirituall effects with theirs; neither did the ordinary Pastors that succeeded those blessed Apostles expect any other issue of their hands imposed, yet still imposed their hands; and whether should we affect to be like them, in acting and approving the laying on of hands, or to some heesternall teachers that refuse and disallow of it? The common plea of those gain-sayers is the cessation of those miraculous gifts which were in the Apostolick times by their onely hands bestowed; (others in great numbers had the Holy Ghost, none gave

gave it but they) whereupon they argue , as they think strongly, that the effect ceasing the cause is uselesse ; whom I send to our learned *Folk* for satisfaction: There is (saith he) another kind of imposition of hands (besides that miraculous one) mentioned *Hebr. 6. 2.* whereof there may be perpetuall use in the Church ; which is the same which Saint *Austin* calls nothing else but prayer over a man ; and whereof he speaks *Tract. 6.* on the first Epistle of *John &c.* and soon after: We acknowledge imposition of hands with prayer, that they which were so taught and instructed , might receive strength of Gods Spirit , so to continue ; so he. This is that onely which we professe and glory to imitate, as being well assured that the faithfull pray-
ers

ers of godly Pastors and Christian Congregations can never either be out of date, or acceptance.

The second motive shall be *Seet. 13* the great benefit which accrues to the Church of God by the use of this Ordinance; which I had rather to expresse in the elegant and solid termes of learned *Hooker*, then in my own. By this meanes (saith he) it came to passe, that children in expectation thereof were seasoned with the principles of true Religion, before malice and corrupt examples depraved their minds, a good foundation was laid betimes for direction of the course of their whole lives, the seed of the Church of God was preserved sincere and sound, the Prelates, and Fathers of Gods family, to whom

*Hooker
Eccles. pol.
lib. 5. 66.*

whom the care of their souls belonged, saw by triall and examination of them, a part of their own heavy burden discharged, reaped comfort by beholding the first beginnings of true Godlinesse in tender yeers, glorified him whose praise they found in the mouths of Infants, and neglected not so fit an opportunity of giving every one fatherly encouragement and exhortation; whereunto imposition of hands and prayer being added, our warrant for the great good effect thereof is the same which *Patriarchs, Prophets, Priests, Apostles, Fathers*, and men of God have had for such their particular invocations and Benedictions, as no man I suppose professing truth of Religion will easily think to have been without fruit; thus he. And surely

surely these are so excellent fruits of this work of Confirmation that we shall not need to seek out for more; yet I may not passe over a serious and important passage of a late writer, who in a profitable and well laboured discourse of the Doctrine and practice of *Pedobaptisme*, taking an hint from *Calvin* (as he well might) to prove the high antiquity of Baptizing of Infants, by the Primitive practice of their Confirmation, which is under the name of imposition of hands, coupled together therewith; and having well made out his Argument by the received distinction of *Catechumeni*, takes occasion to set forth that Ordinance in the Primitive institution of it; recommending it with those grave Authors forementioned to be of singular use, if it

*Mr. John
Brinsley
Preacher
at Yarmouth,*

*Doctr.
and practice
of
Pedobaptism.
p. 76. 77.
78. &c.*

*So Deodat.
on the
place.*

it were restored to the Original purity; and recounting the benefits that might arise therefrom instanceth in these following; by this meanes the neglected exercise of Catechizing would be brought in life and credit; Secondly, the unity of Faith would be maintained; Thirdly, Parents would be quickned up to a further care of the Religious-education of their children; Fourthly, Children themselves would be put on to seek after knowledge; whereto he addeth two others not hinted formerly by any Author; Fifthly, that by this means, persons ignorant or scandalous might be kept out from communion with the Church in the sacred Ordinance of the Lords Supper; and so the stumbling block of mixt communion removed; Sixtly, that by this
meanes

meanes, the difference of the times about the formality of a Church-covenant, in receiving in of members (as they call them) might be compromised and taken up; there being here the substance of what is there contended for, and that better bottom'd (as he conceives) then the former: All which as they are exceeding weighty and worthy of sad consideration, so, me thinks, this last should be held fit to be listned unto by our brethren of the Church-way; who may easily see how by but the admissiō of a truly Apostolicall institution they may effect that which (not without greater difficulty to be archieved) they project and desire.

The third Motive shall be the *Seet. 14*
mischieves and inconveniences

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which

which follow upon the neglect and want of this holy Ordinance; which do plainly appear (as the right serves to set forth both it self and the wrong) both in the privation of those benefits which we have fore-specified, and in the seizure of those manifold evils which have sensibly ensued.

1. For whiles this institution is let fall, we see Catechizing of Children (then which nothing can be conceived more profitable and necessary in Gods Church) is grown utterly out of fashion.

2. And what wofull distractions of opinions, what horrible Paradoxes of contradiction to the Articles of Christian Faith have been and are daily broached to the world, what good heart can but tremble to consider? Certainly it was not without
out

out great reason, that our wise and learned King *Jāmes* of blessed memory, when complaint was made to him of the growth of Popery in his time, returned answer, that all this was for the want of Catechizing: For surely, if the younger sort were soundly seasoned with true knowledge of the grounds of Religion, they could not be so easily carried away with every wind of Doctrine.

How cold and carelesse are Parents generally grown of breeding their children in a religious way; for that they know they neither are, nor shall be ever called to any account of their knowledge or proficiency.

How utterly regardlesse are the children themselves of so much as a verball learning the

principles of Religion , which shall never be required of them to the shame of their ignorance or unperfittesse ; being in the mean time wholly taken up with vain toyes , and idle impertinencies?

5. With what bold and finfull ignorance do too many of the promiscuous multitude thrust themselves upon Gods table? which might be clearly avoided , if the prudent and Godly order of our Church were duly observed ; that none should be admitted to the Communion but those that have been Confirmed ; none Confirmed but those who are able to give account of the Catechisme set forth by the Church , containing the main grounds of Christian Doctrine, viz. the Belief, the ten Commandements , the Lords Prayer, and the Sacraments.

Rubrick
after the
order of
Confir-
mation.

Last-

Lastly, how lawlessly vicious are the lives of too many, which might have been in all likelihood somewhat restrained, if in the entring of their youth, they had publickly engaged themselves to God and the Congregation, to renew their Baptismall Covenant, in renouncing the World, the Devill, and the Flesh; and solemnly promising to do their utmost indeavour to keep Gods holy Will and Commandements, and to walk in the same all the dayes of their life?

In the account of most of Calvin ^{bt supra.} these great inconveniences, I ^{Instit. l. 4.} am seconded by Master Calvin ^{c. 19.} himself, who plainly imputes to the want of this Discipline, so much querrell in matter of Belief, so much ignorance and rudenesse in too many, and so

fearfull distractions with new and wilde opinions set abroach every where in the World.

So as, whether we consider the convenience and honour of our conformation to the Primitive Church of Christ, or the great profit that ariseth from the due observation of this Ordinance, or the no small inconveniencies and mischieves which ensue upon the neglect of it, we have great reason to wish, that it may be happily in the purity of it restored to the Church of God.

Sect. 15 In the mean time let no man think to choke me with the objection of the disorder, and utter inefficacy of this Ordinance, as it was lately wont to be practised in our Church; I may not deny that in too many places there was fault enough

nough even on both parts, both of the giver and receiver: For the one Mr. *Hooker* gives a grave and modest touch of re-
Hooker Eccle. pol. l. 5. of Confir. 66.
 proof; No, saith he, there is no cause we should doubt of the benefit, but surely great cause to make great complaint of the deepe neglect of this Christian duty, almost with all them to whom by right of their place and calling the same belongeth: Let them not take it in evil part, the thing is true, their small regard hereunto hath done harm in the Church of God, thus he. Neither can I but justifie his gentle reprehension: The Fathers of the Church generally failed in the zealous prosecution of this so beneficiall a work, being I suppose discouraged with either the coldnes or adversnes of too many of their charge, into whose
 E 4 thoughts.

thoughts some otherwise affected teachers had instilled a strong prejudice against this institution; hereupon having eye enough to their own peace, they were content silently to let fall the frequent and regular performance of that which their hearts allowed; afterwards, in the beginning of King *James* his Reign, they were quickend with this Synodical Constitution: Forasmuch as it hath been a solemn ancient and laudable custome in the Church of God, continued from the Apostles times, that all Bishops should lay their hands upon children Baptized and instructed in the Catechisme of the Christian Religion, praying over them, and blessing them, which we commonly call Confirmation, and that this holy action hath been

*Can. &
Const. Eccles.
c. 116c.*

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accustomed in the Church in former ages, to be performed in the Bishops visitation every third year; we will and appoint that every Bishop, or his Suffragane in his accustomed Visitation, do in his own Person carefully observe the said custome, &c. Upon this Canon, the Bishops generally were not indiligent in performing this part of their charge, insomuch as had there been a correspondent forwardnesse, both in the people, and in their Brethren of the Ministry (who are by the Canon charged with the care of preparing and procuring the presentation of such persons as are meet to be admitted to Confirmation) this service had certainly been accomplished with good effect, and was by divers of them done accordingly.

*Can. 69
Constit.
Can. 61.*

But soon after, divisions grew on, the Authority of Ecclesiasticall Superiors began to abate in the minds of men, and there wanted not who suggest it to be a piece of Piety to dislike and decry this (which they termed a Superstitious) Ceremony; so as now there wanted heads on which hands should be imposed: Whiles yet in some places of the remoter Diocesses, this Episcopall Benediction was (in the other extrem) sought with so too much heat, as that it was not possible to be given otherwise then in a breathlesse and tumultuary way, as I formerly intimated.

It is not then for us to say how an holy service is performed, but how it should be; what errors passe in any Godly administrations, ought not so much

much to disgrace the Act, as to invite an amendment; and let me be bold to say, that were this institution carefully and punctually acted on all parts, according to the rules prescribed by the Church of *England*, there could be no doubt of a plentiful blessing from heaven to be powred down upon that so Sacred and Religious Ordinance.

Wherefore dear Brethren, laying aside all unjust prejudice that may arise, either from the persons interested, or from the abuse of the thing, or discontinuance of the practice, let us resolve both reverently to esteem, and humbly to submit to an Institution, no lesse then Apostolicall, and expect the Heavenly Benediction of him who

Imposition of hands.

1 Pet. 2.

25.

who is the great Bishop of
our soules ; to whom with
the Father and the Holy
Spirit be all Praise,
Honour , and
Glory, for e-
vermore.

Amen.

FINIS



